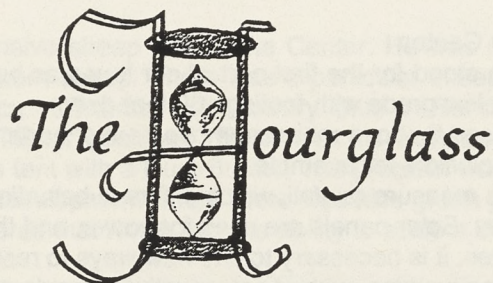


Historical Society of Palm Desert

P.O. Box 77

Palm Desert, CA 92261

(760) 346-6588



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SPRING 2004

VOL. 12, NO. 1

BOYD DEEP CANYON DESERT RESEARCH CENTER

Twenty members and guests of the Society went to see for themselves what this secretive and exclusive place is all about. Many have heard of this University of California-Riverside reserve, but few have been invited to enter. On February 11th our group gathered in the Living Desert's parking lot. There we filled just a few cars to capacity, proceeded to the gate of The Reserve, skirted Ironwood's golf course, and found ourselves on a very bumpy road. Finally we got to the gate where we were met by Dr. Al Muth, the Director of the Research Center. From here on we were treated to an interesting desert adventure.

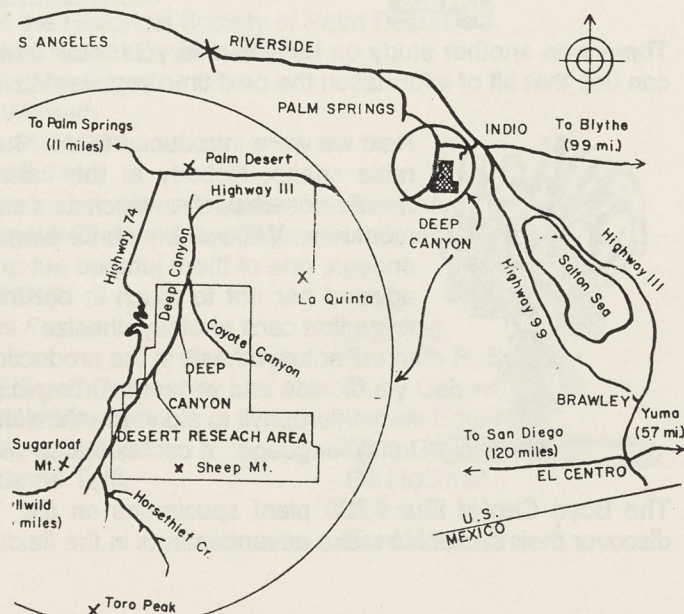


Who was this man? Philip Boyd was born in Indiana in 1902, but as fate would have it he was afflicted with tuberculosis and ended up moving to Palm Springs for his health in 1920. He managed the Bank of America branch, joined the Chamber, led the campaign for the city's incorporation, took a seat on the City Council, and became the first mayor. With partners he developed the Deep Well Guest Ranch and raised vegetables for 8 years, until he sold it to Thunderbird Country Club. He spent 4 years from 1945-49 in the state Assembly, brought a University of California campus to Riverside, and served on the UC Board of Regents from 1958-72. While on the Palm Springs Desert Museum board he was one of the founders of the Living Desert Reserve, and donated 3,000 acres for UCR's research center here in Palm Desert. All this, done by a man who had TB, makes us feel like we're standing still. At age 88 Philip Boyd died at Eisenhower Medical Center.

Now let's move back in history to the late 1930s when William Mason came to this area looking for a site to build a private school for boys. He purchased 273 acres about a half mile south of Hwy. 111 not far from Palm Village. Because he didn't find water, the land was put up for sale. It was purchased by Mayor Boyd of Palm Springs. In the center of this acreage was a 2-1/2 acre butte about 30 feet above the surrounding terrain. Because of the spectacular view, it was a great place for barbeques. One day in 1943 the Boyds arrived with guests to find their picnic grounds under military guard. General Patton wanted to use it for his troops who were training at Camp Young to practice deployment under air attack. Later it was used as a depot for repairing motor vehicles. The army had drilled ten successful wells on the property for the training of their engineers. They left the area in 1944 for North Africa.

Phil and Dorothy Boyd decided to provide lodgings for family and guests, and the place took on the name of Deep Canyon Ranch. While horseback riding about 4 miles south of the ranch, Boyd came upon some beautiful scenery along Pines to Palms Hwy. He purchased three sections of property which extended up to the 3,000 foot level. In 1959 Boyd gave the land to UC for research purposes. The area was later expanded to 5,901 acres (university-owned) and 10,400 acres (federal land.)

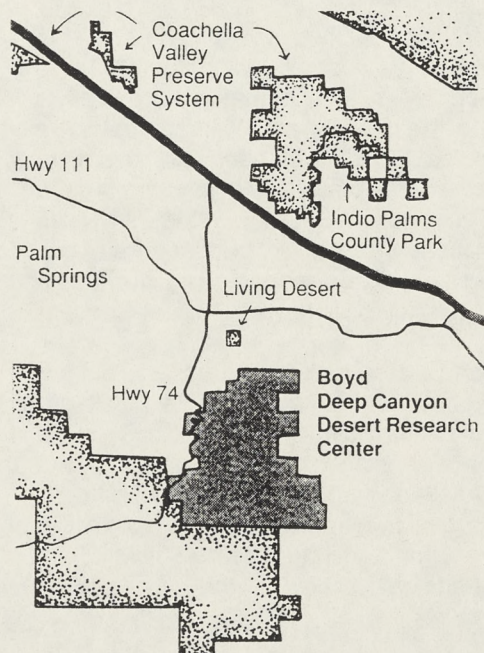
In 1965 the University of California began a unique group of 36 sites which they call the Natural Reserve System – lands they hold for the purpose of doing research. Covering a total of 17,000 acres at elevations from 750-4,000 feet, each reserve has a different ecosystem. The largest one is 6,500 acres and the smallest is in Idyllwild.



A few facts about the Research Center:

- The levee on which we stood for the first part of our tour was built to withstand the 500-year flood. It is 18 feet above to 18 feet below grade with footings 60 feet deep.
- Listening stations are used that can measure movement of earth through low-frequency sound waves. They can detect a nuclear explosion, for example.
- Official weather stations measure rainfall, which differs substantially in various parts of the mountain ranges and the Coachella Valley. Solar panels are used for power, and they are downloaded every month.
- Because biology changes, it is necessary to find new ways to restore ailing ecosystems.
- They have a computer networking system set up with Riverside and San Diego.
- Obtaining a good supply of water for the center has not been easy. It was especially needed in case of fire. Part of the final solution was to build a fire suppression pool. If you didn't know any better, you would call it a swimming pool. Really, it has a double use. On hot summer days a swim helps psychologically, because after three days, efficiency drops dramatically.

There are a few historical mysteries which need explanations. For instance, a cabin was discovered that had access to the entire water shed. Also, there is a quarter-mile water diverter the source of which is unknown. What about the water tank believed to have been erected around 1918-20? There's a 1918 homestead on a quarter-section of B.L.M. land. The rock piles found in the area, are they survey markers or Indian shrines?



The general public cannot enter this UC reserve; the reason for this is that studies need to be done in undisturbed environments. However, researchers from all over the world can apply to do qualified projects here. The Boyd reserve has limited facilities including an office, bunks, labs, library and a campground. Those on staff include the resident director, biologist, research assistants, and reserve steward.

The number of species identified in the Deep Canyon Transect (1991) are:

- over 600 vascular plants	- 46 reptiles
- over 2,500 invertebrates	- 228 birds (102 nesting)
- 9 amphibians	- 47 mammals

We saw the quail pens for a breeding project done by a student from Princeton University, resulting in a \$30,000 donation. The lady researcher discovered that coveys meet and intermix, so the resulting genetic exchange blurs the varieties. In other words, they aren't fussy about who they mate with, just so long as it's another quail.



There was another study on beetles. Did you know that the beetle is the most prevalent insect in the world? You can use that bit of information the next time you want to impress someone with your knowledge of trivia.



Next we were introduced to the "Jumping Cholla" cacti. It is an enemy more dreaded than the rattle snake. Nobody at the center would be caught dead without his handy-dandy little needle-nosed pliers, which is carried for the express purpose of removing these pickery monsters. We were just thinking that this story was a little bit over-blown when.....sure enough, one of them jumped out and attached itself to the back of a lady's hand. They quickly advised her not to touch it; but they immediately snatched it away with the pliers. Did you know that cacti photosynthesize? In case you aren't a scientist, Webster says:

Photosynthesis is the production of organic substances, chiefly sugars, from carbon dioxide and water occurring in green plant cells supplied with enough light to allow chlorophyll to aid in the transformation of the radiant energy into a chemical form.

In lay language: a cactus stores sunlight during the day and uses it for growth at night.

The Boyd Center has 1,800 plant specimens on file. The creosote and sorrel can aid mankind if we can but discover their secrets to make advancements in the fields of agriculture, medicine, etc.

In the late 1960s Jack Turner built an extensive sheep pen at the Center. He was doing a study on a gnat that carries a virus which was detrimental to bighorn sheep. There was a particular sheep named "Rosie" that got the reputation of being a pest because of antics at Thunderbird Country Club in Rancho Mirage. Finally, she was relegated to a home at the Living Desert. Turner borrowed "Rosie" for his experiments. He put up a tent, then collected the bugs in a jar from the top of the tent with a Dust-Buster. The problem was that Rosie would disappear regularly and often be found at the Bighorn development where there was nice green grass and flowers to eat. The mystery was finally solved when they discovered that Rosie had the ability to scale a 6-foot chain link fence.

Our tour group hiked up to the head of Deep Canyon and admired the ocotillo and barrel cacti that clung to the slopes. How do these plants grow out of solid rock? There seemed to be no soil at their bases. Deep Canyon has a 12-mile water course. During the various floods the course has shifted back and forth between two locations and 1,500 feet of silt gushed downward. A terrace was removed by the 1976 flood resulting in the current flood plane. The history is all there, written in the horizontal markings on the rocky walls of Deep Canyon.

We thoroughly enjoyed our commune with nature. If you have a chance to make this excursion – go! You won't be sorry.



NOMINATING COMMITTEE RESULTS

Chairperson: Jean Ernst

Members: Joyce White, Kay Young, Bonnie Bowie

President:	Hal Rover	Directors:	Beverly Bergh	Don Graybill
Vice-Pres:	Dick Folkers		Harold Bird	Julian "Bud" Lesser
Secretary:	Bonnie Bowie		Lois Bradstreet	Lyn Manor
Treasurer:	Helene Harrison		Barbara Eastes	Brett Romer
Past-Pres:	Ginny Folkers		Jean Ernst	Joyce White

You will receive a ballot in the mail at election time.

THANKS TO BOB WILMETH

The Board of Directors and the membership of the Historical Society of Palm Desert express their deepest appreciation to Robert D. Wilmeth, Jr.

a partner in the accounting firm of
Able, Krieger & Wilmeth
73-350 El Paseo – Suite 201
Palm Desert – 346-7413

for his dedication, time and effort during the years he served as Treasurer on the Board.

Note: We know it was especially difficult during busy income tax time, and he still promises to do the Society's.

NEW MEMBERS

Supporting:

- Gary Smithson

Business:

- Baxley Properties

Dick Baxley

- Full Gallop Marketing

Piper Close

- The Inn at Deep Canyon

Family:

- Dr. & Mrs. Edward Gordon

- John & Patricia Marzicola

- James & Arlene Sellers

- Thomas & Diane Tefft

Individual:

- Kenneth R. Burns

- Ruby Calvert

- James Eggers

- Gina Gagnon

- Bill Hoffman

- Milton B. Lied

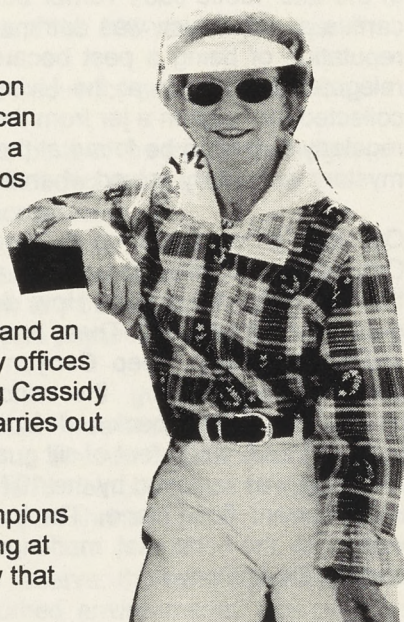
- Kent W. Smith

JOYCE WHITE
To Receive Palm Desert's "Senior Inspiration" Award
Wednesday, March 31

Currently the Vice-President of the Historical Society, Joyce has captured the attention of the wider community. Though it's hard to believe that this petite bundle of energy can qualify for the title "senior", her long list of accomplishments testifies that it has taken a few years to compile. In 1958 she opened an escrow office after moving here from Los Angeles. She met and married Charlie White and became the office manager for his construction company. As if that weren't enough work, they started a hardware store on the side.

Joyce belonged to the parent's club at Washington School, was a Girl Scout leader, and an attentive mother to her daughter. In 1965 she joined the Soroptimists, has held many offices and is still a mainstay. A charter member of the Society, Joyce chaired our Hopalong Cassidy Day open house, took charge of the blueprint project, helps with the archives, and carries out every duty she accepts to perfection.

The 12th annual Senior Inspiration Awards luncheon will be at the Hyatt Grand Champions Resort in Indian Wells. Tickets are \$25. For reservations call 674-9992 (or) for seating at the Society table call Anne at 346-6588. Let's all turn out to show this wonderful lady that we hold her in very high esteem.



HOPALONG CASSIDY TRAIL DEDICATION
SOCIETY OPEN HOUSE A HUGE SUCCESS
January 31, 2004

"Hoppy Day" in Palm Desert turned out to be very successful and lots of fun for those who attended. It started at 10 a.m. in the foot hills at Homme Adams Park, with the Coyote band playing, horseback riders parading, hiking clubs climbing, and lovely Grace Boyd (Hoppy's widow) welcoming everyone with a radiant smile.

Meanwhile, at the Society everyone was hustling around getting ready for the open house scheduled for 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Chairperson Joyce White had double-checked all the details. Jan Holmlund and her helpers had spent weeks collecting Hoppy memorabilia, making and setting up exhibits. Jean Ernst had all her docents at their assigned stations. Lois Bradstreet had the decorated refreshment table loaded with delectable cookies. All was ready..... and a record 434 visitors turned up.

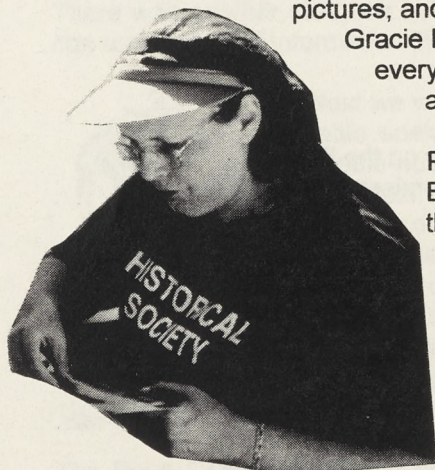


Jean Ernst

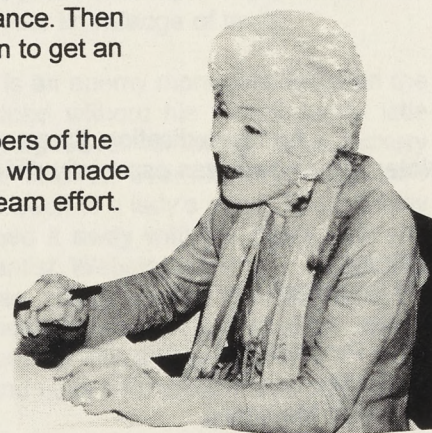
People enjoyed the spectacular exhibits, socialized, had refreshments, watched film clips, took pictures, and had a great time. Many people were waiting to see and talk to Gracie Boyd, who after some delay, made her appearance. Then everyone formed an orderly line and waited their turn to get an autographed photo of Hoppy and Grace.

President Hal Rover and the officers and members of the Board of Directors thanks all the loyal members who made this open house so memorable. It was a great team effort.

The Hopalong Cassidy exhibit will remain in place until June.



Jan Holmlund



Gracie Boyd

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Ed Mullins Memorial PicnicMarch 28
 Spring Luncheon.....April 28
 Founder's Day.....May 14

Mark you calendars !!

ANNUAL PICNIC IN THE PARK

Sunday – March 28 – 11:30 a.m.

By now you have received your invitation for this event. At noon the Keedy Kids, Barbara and Doug, will serve up burgers in memory of their dad, Bob Keedy, who owned Keedy's restaurant for years. A donation of \$5 per person will cover a burger, chips, dessert and a beverage. Also on the schedule after lunch is a short program, a raffle (lots of neat prizes), and socializing. Chairman Bud Lesser and his sidekick, Carol, have seen to all the details. See you there !!

SPRING LUNCHEON

Wednesday – April 28 – 11:00 a.m.

Jean Hollenbeck has agreed to chair this enjoyable event. Please note that the date in the last newsletter was incorrect. Watch for your invitation in the mail for details – speaker, menu, cost, location, etc.

FOUNDER'S DAY

Friday – May 14 – City Hall

This year the format for the celebration of Founder's Day is being changed to give the recipient wider recognition in the community. Advance publicity will announce the name of the awardee to give friends and family time to make plans to be present.

Palm Awards

In addition to the Founder's Day award, a committee composed of City of Palm Desert/Historical Society/Service Organization members will choose several people each year to receive Palm Awards. The criteria is more flexible than that used for the Founder's Day recipient. More details will be available to you as we get closer to our May date.

 (tear-off)-----

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Individual.....	\$ 20.
Family.....	25.
Supporting.....	50.
Contributing.....	100.
Patron.....	250.
Lifetime Membership.....	1,000.
Business / Organization:	
1 st year.....	75.
Renewal	50.

☐ – I would like to help with Society social events.

MEMBERSHIP

Committee co-chairmen Dick Folkers and John Marman encourage you to actively campaign for new members as you go about your daily business. Their goal for memberships in all categories, including business is 100 for the year 2004. You can use the tear-off at the bottom of the page, or pick up a stack of our beautiful new tri-folds at Society headquarters.

DOCENT TRAINING

Chairperson Jean Ernst held a meeting on March 3. Joyce White gave a history of the Society and encouraged volunteers to get familiar with the subject list used to organize our paper archives. Peg Muir, who worked with C.V. Museum and did 110 classes of 3rd grade tours, has moved to Palm Desert and wants to volunteer her time. President Hal Rover talked about Modernism architecture, the Phil Boyd oral history, using the Polaroid camera, and asked that all docents read "Desert Editor." Lois Bradstreet will set up an outline for docents. Docents should study aerial photos to orient themselves and be able to find locations for visitors. Adele Ruxton discussed the tours that are being planned for school children.

Next docent meeting on Tues. - April 6 – at 3:00 p.m.

Note: The Society needs volunteers who would like to be on committees for its social events. Please call the office and give your name to Anne Tuttle.

DONATIONS TO SOCIETY COLLECTIONS

Gloria Petitto.....	6 books about celebrities
Dick Folkers.....	Frank Capra autobiography
Richard Kelly.....	copy of a Chamber photo
Mr. & Mrs. Don Melvin.....	53 issues of Desert Mag.

Note: If you have donated items to the Society which have not yet been acknowledged, please be patient. Your curator is snowed under trying to prepare for the computerization of the paper archives. She will take care of back-logs as soon as possible.

 (tear-off)-----

BECOME A MEMBER / GIFT MEMBERSHIP

Name _____

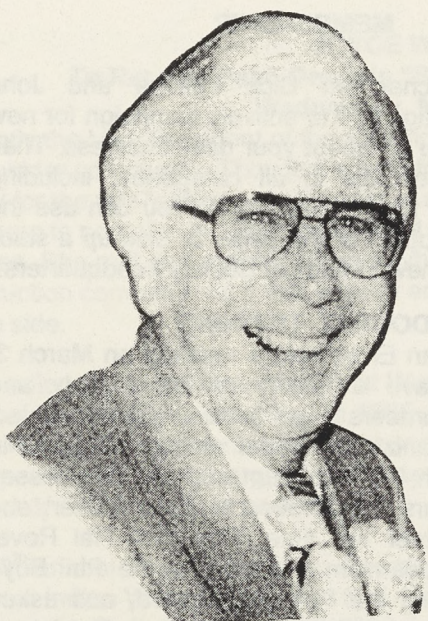
Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Make checks to: Historical Society of Palm Desert

"MR. PALM DESERT"



Each year the Society remembers Ed Mullins at it's Picnic in the Park. If you are an old-timer in Palm Desert, you knew and loved this man. Are you new on the scene? Come to the picnic and we'll tell you about him. See details on page 5.

NOTES OF INTEREST

Jan Holmlund, our long-time museum consultant is writing a book – a time-consuming project. Do you know anyone who is experienced in setting up exhibits or is willing to learn how to do it?

Tom Tefft, a retired professor, has recently spent time researching railroad history in Society archives for a possible book. Tom gives talks at the Living Desert's model train exhibit.

Harold Bird has offered his services when we begin computer input of the archives.

Duchess Emerson, niece of Cliff Henderson, was a guest the Feb. 25th Board meeting. She brought with her a letter from her cousin, Evonne Riddell, daughter of Randall Henderson.

Correction: An item in the last newsletter said that Jean Krauss (Walker) and her husband owned a printing company in the Desert Magazine Building. The business may have been located elsewhere.

2004 YARD SALE

Since this project seems to be our best fundraiser, we are already thinking about next Fall. Keep us in mind for saleable donations.

Talk to you again in the Summer "Hourglass."

- Ginny Folkers, editor

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Palm Desert, CA 92260